

Reflective Practice in the Changing World of Education

A course especially designed for Veteran Teachers

Board the bus of experience!



Most of the participants of this course have substantial teaching experience; therefore, educators enrolled in this course are asked to look concretely at their teaching practices, especially as teaching and learning are affected by a rapidly changing world. It is no surprise that the best teachers are those

- who reflect on their strengths as well as challenges,
- who share materials willingly with their peers,
- who observe their peers and invite their peers to observe them,
- who talk specifically and concretely about the art of teaching,
- who measure student achievement and set goals to improve it,
- who identify their students as unique, individual people who can all learn,
- who evolve as the world around them does.

Accordingly, then, in every session teachers look at current issues and practices in education, hoping to improve both instructional practices and student achievement.

Culture, Economic Status, and Institutional Biases

In the first sessions, course participants look at factors such as culture, economic status, and institutional biases, as they affect teacher and student behaviors in classrooms on a daily basis. Cultural studies can no longer focus on foods, festivals, and dress; instead, teachers must consider the power inherent in the dominant culture, must acknowledge that culture evolves, must understand that culture often undergoes a hybridization process, and must recognize culture and economics as an influence on the way students learn in our classrooms. After all, unprecedented diversity has come to our public schools in the past decade.

Praise and Goal Setting

According to researcher Jere Brophy at Michigan State University, praise cannot be equated with reinforcement and, as a result, student achievement. Too often teacher praise is overused. In this session, participants look at attitudes students take toward learning, sincere teacher praise, and setting smart goals.

Cooperative Teaching Models

In the age of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) that require content teachers working closely with special educators and other specialists, this session presents effective inclusion models and excellent co-teaching models, stressing the benefits of co-teaching and the need for all students to have access to regular curriculum.

Cooperative Learning Models

This session is designed to look at various collaborative learning models. Among the pedagogical strategies and issues discussed are cooperative learning, constructivism, group investigation, flexible grouping, heterogeneous grouping, homogeneous grouping, the “Power Shift,” groups with pre-assigned roles, groups that assign their own roles, and groups given no roles.

Technology

Rapidly changing technology can be used as an excellent teaching tool, a medium for learning, and a fine assessment. Several examples of each are presented, and course participants are able to make materials during the class session.

Meeting Dates, Times, and Location:

Classes meet from September through December. Course dates are 9/14, 9/28, 10/5, 10/19, 11/2, 11/16, 11/30, and 12/14. Classes run from 3:34-6:15 at Floral Street School.

3 Graduate Credits available from Worcester State College. \$300 reduced-rate tuition qualifies for district salary schedule advancement and re-certification. Additional \$25 non-refundable registration fee secures place in class. Spaces are limited.

Course qualifies for district reimbursement.

The "assignments" are relatively brief; none are longer than a page, involve no research paper or exams, and are ALL classroom-based. We also have alternative assignments for the "specialists" (reading, SPED, library, phys ed, etc.).